

Surplus Success . . .

Surplus Property Helps Murray City Police To Serve and Protect

Through the Federal Surplus 1033, also called Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) program the Murray City Police Department was able to acquire two of the three armored personal vehicles, called Peace Keepers, released to public safety agencies in the State of Utah. The U.S. Marshal received the third, however that vehicle is currently on loan to the Salt Lake County Sheriffs Department.

The Armadillo is a more "public friendly" armored vehicle than the traditional track vehicles known as a tank.

"Its good protection, but doesn't look like a tank driving down the road," said Detective Mike Fernandez of the Murray Police Department.

The Peacekeeper is built on a Dodge truck chaise, which makes repairing the vehicle inexpensive and relatively simple. The interior of the personnel carrier can hold up to 11 people or several stretchers. Murray City has added to the transportation ability of the vehicle by having side rails, back rails and firefighter handles welded along the outside. This will allow more officers to safely enter a dangerous situation or more victims to exit safely under violent circumstances. Watching videos of the Columbine High School shooting encouraged Murray City to be better prepared should a similar situation happen anywhere in Utah.

"They had one or two SWAT guys with a shield and 30 kids. I guess you're serving some purpose there, but there's really no protection," Fernandez said. "We, as a department, looked at [and thought] 'what if something like that happened here'. The SWAT Team went



The Armadillo is pictured above as purchased from the Surplus Property Program and below after completion of the restoration.



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- Mike Fernandez

out training in the High School practicing how they would get the kids out, but once they got them outside of the affected area how do we get them to a safe zone? We [found] that we were doing the same thing, 30 kids and one guy with a little shield. Looks pretty, but it's stupid."

The department then began to explore other options. They looked at the possibility of purchasing a tank. It was not only expensive to purchase, but parts to repair a surplus tank would be difficult to locate. Using existing equipment for cover had been tried by other law enforcement agencies in the past and found to be less than

adequate.

"Last year we had the shooting downtown. If you look at the news clips, when they're moving people out from the building, they're hiding behind fire trucks and ambulances and all that kind'a stuff, well you put a couple rounds into a fire truck and there's a quarter million dollars...poof gone," Fernandez said.

The Murray Police Department had originally requested three of the armored vehicles from F.E. Warren Air Force Base located in Cheyenne Wyoming. Prior to becoming a Police Officer, Detective Fernandez had been stationed at F.E. Warren and was aware that the base had been assigned 28 of the vehicles in 1979